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ABSTRACT

A survey was mailed to head librarians at 118 American art museum libraries to determine the nature and extent of their libraries' services to the public. In addition to some baseline demographic information, survey questions focused on: (1) the types of information sought by the public; (2) the degree to which the public is allowed access to the library; (3) the benefits and challenges in serving the public; and (4) the services that could be provided in the future. Based upon a 75% usable return rate, results indicated that most libraries permit access by the public. In addition, a great majority of libraries are willing to answer reference calls from the public. While public use of art museum libraries is usually permitted, it is not actively encouraged. The picture that emerges is one of quiescence. Lack of resources appeared to be the critical reason why services to the public are not more extensive. The data showed inadequate levels of staffing, not enough materials, and a shortage of funds at most American art museum libraries. A copy of the survey questionnaire is appended. (35 references) (Author/DB)

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# AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF ART MUSEUM LIBRARIES' SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Annette J. Oren

April 1991

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## INTRODUCTION

As librarian at the Columbus Museum of Art the author is often called upon to assist the public in acquiring information. Requests range from inquiries by schoolteachers seeking information on current exhibitions to calls from members of the public at large asking for help in identifying the artist who painted the picture found in a late relative's attic. Because of the author's experiences at the Museum, she became interested in finding out how American art museum libraries serve the public.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature and extent of art museum libraries' services to the public. Despite the paucity of research on art museum libraries, there is evidence to suggest a tradition of such service. Its present dimensions were, however, unknown.

## SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out through a survey (see Appendix) of head librarians at American art museum libraries. In addition to some baseline

demographic information, survey questions focused on:

1. the types of information sought by the public;
2. the degree to which the public is allowed access to the library;
3. the benefits and challenges in serving the public; and
4. the services that could be provided in the future.

The objective was to gather data to compile a comprehensive picture of services to the public.

For the purposes of the study, a broad definition of the term, "public" was used. "Public" was defined as any individuals who are not museum staff members.

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

Education is one of the primary missions of American art museums today. In addition, increasingly, art museums are being challenged to make themselves accessible to all segments of the community, rather than being elitist "temples on the hill." Allowing and encouraging the public to use the museums's library is one way of achieving the educational mission. Yet, there are no published studies describing how art museum libraries currently serve the public.

Certainly, the educational mission of their parent institutions obligate art museum libraries to provide some degree of access and

service to the public. The American Association of Museums (AAM), which is the accrediting body for all types of museums in the United States, regards the question of library access as an important one. Since the inception of museum accreditation in 1970, the accreditation standards checklist has included three questions specifically pertaining to museum libraries. One of these relates to the question at hand, stating "Is the library open to the public?"(Swinney 1978, 52-53). Thus, at this time, a study of the nature and extent of art museum libraries' services to the public was appropriate.

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was exploratory because of the lack of previous studies on the research problem. Head librarians served as survey respondents; therefore this study was limited by their knowledge and insightfulness vis a` vis the operation of their libraries and their biases concerning public access to art museum libraries. In addition, within the scope of this study, no attempt was made to elicit from the public their perceptions as to the nature and extent of services which art museum libraries provide.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The art museum library is a special library, existing within a larger institution--the art museum. Its mission is irrevocably linked to that of its parent organization. Therefore, the first part of this literature review focuses on the development of the art museum itself. Considerable attention is given to reviewing literature about the proper role of the museum in American society, a subject which has been debated since the establishment of museums in this country.

The second part of this review pertains to the literature on the development and characteristics of museum libraries in general and art museum libraries in particular. Unfortunately, few studies of either museum or art museum libraries exist and consequently, the literature is woefully inadequate. Within this limitation, however, every effort has been made to review the organization, services, resources, and needs of the art museum library.

### The Establishment of American Art Museums

Before looking at the establishment of American art museums, it is useful to briefly consider how and why museums in general got their start in this country. The prototype of the American museum was privately

owned collections of curiosities (e.g., preserved animals, fossils, coins) better known as cabinets (Orosz 1990, 14-15).

During the Colonial Period, several groups developed collections largely as a part of their efforts toward self-improvement. The Library Company of Philadelphia, organized by Benjamin Franklin, was one such group. Founded in 1731, by the 1740s the Library had collected artifacts which were available only to members. Doctors at the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia began a collection in 1757 when they acquired a skeleton. Here again, access to the collection was restricted. The public could only view the collection if they paid an exhorbidant price (Orosz 1990, 15-17).

Philadelphia was not the only city which had educational and self-improvement societies with collections. Charleston was generally recognized as the cultural center of the colonial South. In 1748, a library society was formed. This Society began to collect materials about the natural history of South Carolina. By 1773, this collection had become known as the Charleston Museum, the first American museum (Orosz 1990, 15, 22-23).

Energy was directed away from intellectual pursuits when the

Revolution broke and collections languished. After the Revolution, a new sense of nationalism swept the fledgling nation. There was a movement away from elitism, toward democracy (Orosz 1990, 24-25). It was against this backdrop that the American museum developed.

Museums in America originally meant natural history museums. After all, this was the Age of Enlightenment. At first entrepreneurs displayed their collections making a few dollars while they satisfied the public's demand for scientific knowledge (Orosz 1990, 14-15). P.T. Barnum, the famous circus organizer, was certainly the most influential of these entrepreneurs. The public would flock to see his exhibitions of animal curiosities (e.g., a "unicorn") (Tomkins 1970, 25-26). Over the years, entrepreneurs gave way to permanent collections (Orosz 1990, 172).

While natural history museums were organized early, most American art museums were not established until after the Civil War. The public was deeply suspicious of art. Art was considered European and a symbol of colonial oppression. This view is not suprising considering that many Americans were either immigrants or the children of immigrants. Gradually, however, Americans began to warm to the idea of art. They

began to attend exhibitions which were staged for mass appeal (Tomkins 1970, 25-27).

In 1870, three of this country's major art museums, The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, were incorporated. Thus the year 1870 marked the beginning of a period of rapid art museum development which lasted until 1929 (Zeller 1989, 10). By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States had more than 25 art museums (Tomkins 1970, 21).

The Debate Over Mission

Despite the fact that American art museums represent a "social victory of democratic over aristocratic principles" (Adam 1939, 2), there has long been a debate over public access and the role of the art museum in American society. During the post Civil War era, the (chiefly Protestant) church declined in its influence. Immigrants flooded urban centers (e.g., New York City). Liberal thinkers developed a boundless faith in education. They believed that education could cure all of society's ills. Thus they strongly supported public high schools, state universities and a national system of free education. These same individuals supported the

establishment of art museums because they believed that the masses needed an education in art to become more cultured and refined. Thus art museums were organized with the goals of education, moral uplift and the social betterment of the masses. The crucial point here is that American art museums were founded on the assumption that art is inseparable from education (Tomkins 1970, 20).

One might assume then that all art museum administrators would subscribe to a policy of unlimited public access to their collections. Such was not (and is not) the case. Debate has continued through the years. It was especially rancorous during the 1920s. On one side of the issue stood Benjamin Ives Gilman, president of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, who believed that public access should be restricted because, "the dignity of works of art suffer from unlimited freedom of access" (1923, 380). On the other side stood John Cotton Dana, founder and first director of the Newark Museum. Given Dana's vast experience as a public librarian, it is not suprising to learn that he strongly believed in unlimited public access to all museums (1917; 1920; 1927). Dana stated, "A museum is good only in so far as it is of use" (1920, 13). He did not believe in the sanctity of art objects (Dana 1920, 9) and held little regard for Gilman's position that

public access be restricted for the sake of "the safety of collections of fine art" (Gilman 1923, 380).

Dana (1917; 1920; 1927) firmly believed that the role of the museum was to educate the public. Education was "a museum's social responsibility and should be its primary mission" (Museums for a New Century 1984, 55). Gilman (1923), on the other hand, saw the art museum's role as primarily aesthetic.

Today, the American Association of Museums defines an art museum as,

> an organized and permanent nonprofit institution, essentially educational or aesthetic in purpose, with professional staff which owns and utilizes tangible objects, cares for them and exhibits them to the public on some regular schedule (Swinney 1978, 9).

This definition takes into account both Dana's and Gilman's viewpoints. Increasingly, however, education is becoming the art museums' raison d'être (Museums for a New Century 1984, 31).

The Changing Role of the Art Museum

One can easily see that art museums have suffered from a dual identity, serving both as elitist shrines and as the "utilitarian instrument

for democratic education" (Tonelli 1990, 32). Tensions between these two aims simmered for years, only to be brought to the boiling point during the 1960s and the early 1970s. Throughout the Nation, this was a period when values were questioned. American art museums, so often located in deteriorating urban settings, found themselves the targets of hostility. Community groups demanded greater access to museums and programming that was responsive to the needs of minorities and the disadvantaged (Harvey and Friedberg 1971; Museums: Their New Audience 1972).

At about the same time, a report done by a commission of the American Association of Museums presented the case for increased federal support for museums (America's Museums: The Belmont Report 1968). In turn, new federal support brought with it the requirement of providing greater public access and the need to attract new audiences (Tonelli 1990, 37).

Art museums are currently facing a financial crisis. Ironically, the crisis is caused in part by museums' efforts to serve a wider American audience. Museums have become more and more dependent on public funds (Tonelli 1990, 48) at a time when the Nation is facing a staggering deficit and major social problems (e.g., escalating crime, drug abuse and poverty).

In the current Recession, art museums find themselves striving to continue building pluralistic, multicultural educational programs while facing major cutbacks in funding. In other words, are museums must do more with less.

The Development of the Art Museum Library

In many instances, art museum libraries were established when their parent institutions were first organized or shortly thereafter. For example, four major art museums (i.e., the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Brooklyn Museum), all founded before 1900, mention libraries in their founding statements (Freiband 1973, 18-19). In fact, these statements tended to place the libraries on an equal footing with the museums themselves. This point is illustrated in the founding statement of the Metropolitan Museum of Art:

> For the purpose of establishing and maintaining a museum and library of art, of encouraging and developing the study of fine arts, and the application of art to manufactures and practical life, of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects, to the end of furnishing popular instruction and recreation (Door 1881, 10).

Of course, the four museums discussed above were established

during a period when public museums (and public libraries too) were heavily influenced by nineteenth century humanitarian ideals and the beginnings of the Adult Education Movement. Therefore, there was a strong emphasis on relating to the public, on usefulness, popular instruction, and enlightenment (Freiband 1973, 17).

Actually, museum libraries were even used as a means for promoting the building of museums. In 1931, the Museum of Modern Art (opened in 1929) began a drive to raise funds for a permanent building. This drive emphasized both the Museum and the need for the Museum to have a "public library within its operation"(Phillpot 1985, 29).

Then too, museum organizers were often heavily involved with the public library movement as well. John Cotton Dana is probably the best known of the individuals involved in both movements. He succeeded in placing a branch of the Newark Free Public Library (where he had organized the first public library business reference section) in the Newark Museum itself (Dana 1920, 42).

Art museum libraries have also been used as a means for acquiring public funds. The first museum to do this was the St. Louis Art Museum which was founded in 1906 and opened its library in 1915. The Museum

was the first American museum supported directly through public funding and its library has always had regular public hours. Indeed, the stated purpose of the library was to make art information available to the "common man" (Sigala 1990, 188).

The Role of the Art Museum Library

It is clear that the art museum library was originally intended as "an indispensible component of the museum" (Hull and Fearnley 1976, 289). Also, the library originally had an important role in furthering the educational aims of the museum (Sigala 1990, 188).

Ideally, the museum library,

> plays a central role in helping its parent institution perform its educational function by providing the extensive collection and searching services of a research library, the current materials and awareness programs of a special library, and the general collections and public education activities of a community library (Bonjnin and Tepper 1985, 85).

Yet, there is evidence that a gap exists between the stated purpose and what has actually taken place within art museums over the years (Freiband 1973, 17).

An examination of the museum literature revealed only a few

discussions of the role of the art museum library. Dana (1920, 42-43) saw museum libraries in the context of making museums more useful. Coleman (1939, 339) discussed the museum library spreading itself about the institution to provide a place for the public to read about art. Adam (1937, 96) wanted museum libraries to serve as supplements to community public libraries, making their specialized research and reference collections available to the ordinary citizen. Low (1942) believed that few people entering a museum would know of the existence of a library and that museum libraries were not fulfilling their mission. He summarized the problem as follows:

> the trouble is that the average museum library had been devoted to scholarship and this alone. Its duty to the public has been ignored (Low 1942, 48-49).

The library literature is also largely silent on the role of the museum library. Coolidge discussed the present (1959) and future roles of museum libraries. In his opinion, museum libraries should broaden their functions while at the same time, becoming specialized research centers which assist the visitor in understanding works of art (Coolidge 1959, 119-122).

More recently, Morley (1985, 50) maintained that art museum libraries have an especially difficult role to fill. She outlined two principal functions for the art museum library. The first was as a reference service for the curatorial staff, to carry on the tasks of researching, exhibiting, teaching, publishing, and interpreting the museum's collection for its public (Toupin 1985, 2). Here, as in other types of special libraries, the focus was on serving the institution's own staff. The second function was as a popular reference service for the general public (Morley 1985, 50).

A few others have also commented on the role of the museum library in a general way. For example, Usilton (1963, 11) commented that museum libraries should serve a variety of audiences, including the public. Still others believe that a decision should be made as to the primary role of the art museum library because users effect the size and staffing of libraries (Davis 1966).

Finally, the American Association of Museums (AAM), which is the accrediting body for all types of museums in the United States, considers service to the public a part of the museum library's role. Since the inception of museum accreditation in 1970, the accreditation standards

checklist has included a question about whether the library is open to the public and another regarding willingness to answer reference inquiries (Swinney 1978, 52-53).

Characteristics of Museum Libraries

Museum libraries have not been the subject of much scholarly investigation. Consequently, little is known about their organization, services, resources, and needs. One study which deserves mention is a 1953 survey of 30 art museum libraries in the United States. This study obtained information on origins, founding, background and training of librarians, size and type of collections, patrons, staff salaries, and budgets (Sutherland 1953).

In 1976, Hull and Fearnley, decrying the marginal attention which museum libraries have received, undertook a survey of the more than 3,000 museum libraries in the United States. They surveyed museum libraries of all types including those in art museums. The goal of the survey was to assess the basic conditions of museum libraries and thereby learn something about their problems. Hull and Fearnly obtained data on the financial conditions, scope and nature of collections including access, extent and nature of staffing as well as the services offered by

museum libraries (Hull and Fearnley 1976, 289).

The results of the Hull and Fearnley survey (1976, 291) are quite interesting. For instance, they learned that the major forms of information found in the surveyed libraries were books and photographs. What is startling about this finding is that journals were cited only in a few cases. Apparently, currency is not the great issue in museum libraries (including those found in science and technology museums) that it is in most special libraries. Museum library users evidently have more need of retrospective information (e.g., the history of a particular object).

What about their collections? Over half (53 percent) of the museum libraries who returned the Hull and Fearnley survey had 1,000 or fewer books. Ninety-one percent reported 20,000 or less volumes. The average number of titles (Hull and Fearnley use the terms books, volumes and titles interchangeably) was 8,924. Art museum libraries held a significantly higher number of titles than other types of museum libraries. They averaged 13,000 titles (Hull and Fearnley 1976, 292-294).

One reason for the small number of titles may be the budgets (or lack thereof) of museum libraries. The most frequently reported budget

was zero dollars, While the average budget was $6,130, Hull and Fearnley believe that the median budget of $1,001 "more accurately reflects the difficult financial situation in which most museum libraries find themselves" (1976, 291). Despite their small budgets (Hull and Farnley unfortunately did not report budget size by type of museum library), art museum libraries may be in a slightly better position than other museum libraries to acquire books. Art museum libraries have a long history of acquiring exhibition catalogs (many of which are over 49 pages in length and may be defined as books) through exchange.

Perhaps because of the small size of their collections, 76 percent of the museum libraries reported that they do not lend their books. Almost 80 percent of the libraries reported that they had their collections all or partially cataloged (Hull and Fearnley 1976, 293). This last figure seems very good when one considers the fact that a fairly high proportion of the materials may need original cataloging and the small size of museum library staffs. (See discussion below.)

Staffing is, of course, a critical aspect of the museum library. The vast majority of museum librarians are in one-person libraries. Although the Hull and Fearnley survey is quite old, Larsen reported similar

information in 1985 (ix). St. Clair (1976, 233) defines the one-person library as a library with only one paid staff member. Volunteers are not considered to be staff.

Hull and Fearnley (1976, 295-296) found that only 47 percent of librarians in museums have degrees in library science and many librarians in the smaller museums had no formal training. These findings contrast sharply with the situation in art museum libraries. Although many of these libraries are small, almost 80 percent of the librarians in these libraries held an M.L.S. This may be largely attributed to the work of the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) which over the years has pushed the M.L.S. as a minimum standard for librarians in any type of art library (Usher 1985, 14).

Unfortunately, the Hull and Fearnly (1976) study has not been replicated. One can only guess whether the characteristics of museum libraries have changed in recent years.

Public Access to Art Museum Libraries

Despite a lack of studies, there is evidence of a tradition of service to the public on the part of art museum libraries. Certainly, to be consistent with the stated educational mission of art museums, there

would have to be a degree of such service.

There are also some scattered, largely anecdotal reports of public usage. Ward (1968, 510), commenting on the growth in cultural activities during the 1960s, named the Toledo Museum of Art as an outstanding example of a museum which allows the general public to use its library. She also reported a marked increase in reference calls to the Philadelphia Museum of Art during that same period.

Hull and Fearnley (1976, 297) asked respondents to list the number of hours per week that their libraries were open to the public. Libraries averaged 35 public hours per week.

A case study of four art museums and their libraries (the Brooklyn Museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Baltimore Museum of Art, and the Wadsworth Atheneum) in the 1970s, "examined the museum as a public cultural institution in relation to a changing urban environment" (Freiband 1973, 212). Public use was permitted at all four institutions although it was not actively encouraged (Freiband 1973).

Most of the evidence of public use of art museum libraries is quite dated. Recently, however, a survey of art libraries' reference services determined that 91 percent of art museum libraries which returned

surveys offer some type of art reference service to the public (Godlewski 1989, 67).

## METHODOLOGY

### Design

The present study describes the nature and extent of art museum libraries' services to the public. Because of the exploratory nature of the study, a survey research design (i.e., a mail survey) was chosen. Also, a mail survey was thought to be relatively economical for the sample size and would work well within the time constraints of the study.

### Development of the Survey

The survey instrument contains both open-ended and closed questions (see Appendix). Questions pertain to:

1. demographics (e.g., size of library, nature and number of personnel);
2. characteristics of public users (i.e., are they teachers, artists, scholars?);
3. current public services (e.g., answering telephone inquiries, allowing use of the library by the community at large); and
4. benefits and challenges of public use.

The survey was constructed so that respondents would begin by

answering a series of demographic questions. This strategy was employed so that respondents would become involved in the survey before they encountered any questions which required them to construct a response.

Under ideal circumstances, the instrument would have been pilot tested with a small sample. Such testing was not possible for two reasons. First, all art museum libraries which met certain criteria (see next section) were to be included in the survey since the objective was to formulate as comprehensive a picture of services as possible. Thus, any groups used in pilot testing could not then be included as part of the actual survey. Second, pilot testing did not fit within the time constraints of the study.

In lieu of pilot testing, four members of the professional staff at the Columbus Museum of Art were selected to review the survey. These individuals were chosen because they are knowledgeable about museum libraries and have first-hand experience using art museum libraries as outsiders. Suggestions from these individuals were incorporated into the survey.

In addition to the above reviewers, ten staff members at the Columbus Museum of Art were asked to pretend that they were art museum

librarians to check whether the questions were easy to understand. All role-players reported no difficulty in understanding the questions.

The survey instrument and a description of the procedures were submitted to the Kent State University Human Subjects Review Board in late November, 1990. Approval was granted on December 22, 1990.

Sample Selection

All head librarians whose art museums met the selection criteria delineated below were sent a survey. Selection criteria were as follows:

1. the museum must be solely an art museum (e.g., cannot be a combined art and history museum);
2. the museum must be a "general" art museum (i.e., cannot specialize in contemporary art, folk art, photography, etc.);
3. the museum cannot be a part of any larger educational institution such as a university; and
4. the museum must be accredited by the American Association of Museums (AAM).

All museums listed in The Official Museum Directory, 1990 were reviewed to determine whether they meet the above criteria. The review yielded a sample of 118.

Procedures

On January 7, 1991, after the requisite approvals were obtained, the survey was mailed to the entire sample (118). A cover letter outlining the

purpose of the study and containing assurances of confidentiality accompanied the survey as did a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Survey participants were asked to return the survey by February 10, 1991. They were not required to identify themselves or their museums on the completed survey.

A reminder/thank you note with a second copy of the survey and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope was sent out to the sample approximately two weeks after the initial survey. The objective was to maximize returns.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data were done by examining, interpreting and describing the data. Descriptive statistics were employed to make the data more manageable and to clearly present some of the relationships uncovered in the study.

In the case of the open-ended questions, all responses were read and then appropriate categories were developed. Inevitablely, some nuances of the responses were lost by following this procedure. Otherwise, however, the data could not be presented in an understandable, summary format.

## FINDINGS

Between January 7, 1991 and February 12, 1991, 89 out of 118 surveys were returned. This represents a return rate of 75 percent. In addition to the 89 returned surveys, two museums sent letters indicating that they are new and are just beginning development of their libraries. A third museum indicated that it has no library of its own and instead, relies on a cooperative arrangement with local libraries for services.

Because so little is known about art museum libraries, it was particularly important to receive a high number of responses. Also, as in all surveys, the potential for response bias existed and a high response rate certainly helps to reduce the possiblity of such bias. Babbie's statement that "a response rate of 70 percent or more is very good" (1990, 182) when applied to the current survey indicates a more than adequate response rate.

The discussion which follows is based upon the returned surveys. While some respondents did not answer every question, all useable data were extracted.

### Characteristics

Before looking into the primary research question of art museum

libraries' services to the public, it is important to first address the characteristics of such libraries (e.g., size, contents, staffing, funding). Since so few studies of art museum libraries exist and none of them are recent, one-third of the survey was devoted to questions concerning characteristics. The objective was to establish some baseline data so that there would be a context in which to place head librarians' responses regarding services to the public.

Size. Head librarians were asked to report the number of volumes (or an estimate of that number) held by their libraries. Eighty-four or 94 percent of the returned surveys contained such reports. In a few cases, librarians reported a range (e.g., 25,000-30,000 volumes) and in those cases the ends of the range were averaged to obtain one figure. In order to increase the utility of the data, responses were divided into quartiles and characterized as very small, small, medium, and large libraries.

Table 1 shows the lowest and highest number of volumes, the ranges, the medians, and the means for each quartile as well as for the total sample. The standard deviation for the entire sample and the Pearsonian coefficient of skewness are also reported.

The data indicate considerable variation in the size of art museum

Table 1--Size (in volumes) of art museum libraries, by quartiles

| | Low | High | Range | Median | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First quartile (n=21) Very small libraries | 100 | 4300 | 4200 | 2500 | 2238.66 |
| Second quartile (n=21) Small libraries | 4400 | 12500 | 8100 | 7700 | 7707.57 |
| Third quartile (n=21) Medium libraries | 13500 | 31000 | 17500 | 22000 | 22156.76 |
| Fourth quartile (n=21) Large libraries | 35000 | 250000 | 215000 | 53000 | 91308.57 |
| Total sample (n=84) | 100 | 250000 | 249900 | 13000 | 30852.89 |

Standard deviation for the total sample=49577.41

Pearsonian coefficient of skewness=1.08

libraries. The standard deviation is large, nearly 50,000 volumes. The Pearsonian coefficient of skewness is 1.08, indicating that the data are positively skewed (i.e., smaller libraries outnumber larger libraries).

An examination of the medians and means of the first three quartiles shows that in each case they are similar. In fact, the mean and median of the second quartile almost coincide. Thus, if not for the fourth quartile, the data would have symmetry.

Contents. Head librarians were given a list of different types of

materials (e.g., books, serials, slides) and asked to indicate which of these could be found in their libraries. Their responses are summarized in Table 2. Of the 89 libraries, 100 percent contain books, 99 percent contain exhibition catalogs, 89 percent contain auction catalogs, 80 percent contain vertical files, 76 percent contain serials, 58 percent contain slides, and 45 percent contain videotapes. It is not surprising that all libraries contain books and nearly all contain exhibition catalogs (which are book-like), because many individuals regard books as the essence of the library. In other words, if there are no books, there is no library.

The majority of the libraries have a wide array of types of materials. The data suggest that while size may influence how much of a particular item (e.g., number of books) a library has, in most cases it does not appear to influence whether or not a library contains a particular type of material. There are two exceptions to this finding. First, serials are held by 62 percent of very small and small libraries as opposed to 98 percent of medium and large libraries. Second, slightly more than half (52 percent) of very small libraries contain vertical files as opposed to 89 percent of small, medium and large libraries.

Librarians were also asked to list any other types of materials their

Table 2--Frequency of types of materials, by size of library (n=89)

| | Books | Slides | Serials | Videotapes | Exhibition catalogs | Vertical files | Auction catalogs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very small libraries (n=21) | 21 | 13 | 13 | 9 | 20 | 11 | 17 |
| Small libraries (n=21) | 21 | 14 | 13 | 9 | 21 | 17 | 18 |
| Medium libraries (n=21) | 21 | 10 | 21 | 7 | 21 | 20 | 21 |
| Large libraries (n=21) | 21 | 11 | 20 | 12 | 21 | 19 | 20 |
| Size unknown (n=5) | 5 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Totals | 89 (100%) | 52 (58%) | 68 (76%) | 40 (45%) | 88 (99%) | 71 (80%) | 79 (89%) |

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

libraries contain. Archival materials including such items as manuscripts and oral histories are held by 17 of the libraries (19 percent). Other forms of audiovisual materials (e.g. audio cassettes, compact discs) are held by 13 (15 percent) of the libraries. Six libraries (7 percent) hold microforms, five libraries (6 percent) hold museum calendars, press

releases, exhibition schedules, and annual reports, and two (2 percent) have bookplate collections. It is quite possible that the actual numbers of libraries which hold other types of materials are higher since they were not listed on the survey.

Location. Unlike public libraries which are always accessible to the public and academic libraries which tend to be so also, a special library may well be housed in a non-public area of an institution. Head librarians were asked to indicate whether their libraries are housed in a public or non-public area of the museum. Slightly more than half of the 89 libraries (46 or 52 percent) are located within the main building of the museum in a public area. Thirty-six (40 percent) are located within the main building of the museum in a non-public area. Another seven (8 percent) are housed in a building close by the main building of the museum which may or may not be accessible to the public.

Unit. The art museum library may be part of another department at a museum or it may function as a separate administrative unit. It was hypothesized that being a separate department might be related to size (i.e., larger libraries would tend to have departmental status, while smaller libraries would not). According to the data summarized in Table

3, however, size appears to bear little relation to whether a museum library is part of another department. Sixty-one (69 percent) of the libraries surveyed are separate departments within their respective institutions, while 28 (31 percent) are part of another organizational unit.

Of the 28 libraries which function as part of another organizational unit, nearly equal numbers, 11 and 12 respectively, are part of an education or curatorial department. The five others are in museums which appear to be organized along slightly different lines. Two are in a "collections" department, one is in an "exhibitions" department, one is part of a combined curatorial and education department, and one is part of a combined administration and education department.

Staff. Staff are critical to the operation of any library. Without sufficient numbers of properly trained staff, libraries cannot offer much in the way of services.

Number of staff are logically related to the size of the library (i.e., larger libraries can be expected to have more staff than smaller libraries). Therefore, the data were analyzed by size of library.

Table 4 is a matrix showing number and education of library personnel by size of library. Because respondents indicated that some of

Table 3--Library position in the organizational structure, by size (n=89)

| | Separate department | Part of another organizational unit | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Education | Curatorial | Other[a] |
| Very small libraries (n=21) | 16 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Small libraries (n=21) | 12 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Medium libraries (n=21) | 14 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Large libraries (n=21) | 16 | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| Size unknown (n=5) | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Subtotals | | 11 | 12 | 5 |
| Totals (n=89) | 61 (69%) | 28 (31%) | | |

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

[a]One very small library is part of a collections department, one small library is part of an exhibitions department, one medium library is part of a combined curatorial and education department and another is part of a combined administration and education department.

their libraries had no paid personnel and/or were run by volunteers or a non-library staff member (e.g., the Registrar), a category for these

responses was added.

Table 4--Number and education of library personnel, by size of library (n=89)

| | Full-time with M.L.S. | Part-time with M.L.S. | Full-time non-M.L.S. | Part-time non-M.L.S. | Other[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very small libraries (n=21) | 0 | 7 | 0 | 10 | 11 |
| Small libraries (n=21) | 5 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 7 |
| Medium libraries (n=21) | 20 | 6 | 12 | 7 | 0 |
| Large libraries (n=21) | 67 | 15 | 101 | 84 | 0 |
| Size unknown (n=5) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Totals | 93 | 32 | 116 | 116 | 21 |

[a]Other category indicates the **number of libraries** that reported that they are run by either volunteers or non-library library personnel (e.g., Registrar).

Table 4 suggests that very small and small libraries have markedly different personnel compositions than medium or large libraries. Just over half (11 or 52 percent) of the very small libraries indicated that they have no paid library staff and/or rely on volunteers or other museum personnel to staff their libraries. The remaining ten libraries reported

that they have no full-time staff members (either M.L.S. or non-M.L.S). They reported seven part-time staff members with an M.L.S. and ten part-time, non-M.L.S. staff members for a total of 17 part-time staff members. That means that each of the ten very small libraries with paid library personnel average 1.7 staff members each.

Table 4 indicates that seven (33 percent) of the small libraries have no paid library staff and/or rely on volunteers. The other 14 small libraries average 1.64 staff members each.

Aside from the 18 very small and small libraries which reported that they are run by volunteers and/or have no paid personnel, the only other report of this type came from libraries whose size in unknown. Table 4 shows that three (60 percent) of these libraries have no paid library personnel.

Medium and large libraries present a somewhat different staff picture than their smaller cousins. All have paid staff members. Data in Table 4 indicate that medium libraries average 1.52 full-time personnel and .62 part-time personnel each for a total average of 2.14 staff members. Large libraries average eight full-time personnel and 4.71 part-time personnel each for a total average of 12.71 staff members per large

library.

While the number of personnel a library has is important, the training level of these personnel is also critical. Training may be especially important in a special library such as the art museum library because of the nature of the collection and the relatively low number of personnel. Data shown in Table 4 indicate that of 357 paid personnel, 125 (35 percent) hold the M.L.S. degree. This finding contrasts sharply with an earlier study which indicated that 76 percent of art museum librarians held an M.L.S. degree (Hull and Fearnley 1976, 296). Taken together, the two studies (which are 15 years apart) suggest a disturbing trend toward fewer art museum librarians with the M.L.S. degree.

Funding. Respondents were asked to indicate all sources of library funding. Of the 89 libraries, 80 (90 percent) receive an allocation from their museum's budget, 59 (66 percent) receive funds through gifts or grants from individuals or foundations, 25 (28 percent) receive endowment funds, 22 (25 percent) receive income from sales of slides or other materials, 11 (12 percent) receive monies from a "Friends of the Library" organization or from their state, county or municipality, four (4 percent) receive federal funds, and two (2 percent) receive grants from

other institutions in return for services or funds from other sources.

Two other points deserve mention. First, the nine libraries which receive no allocations from their museums' budgets are all very small or small libraries. Second, although the question of how much money libraries receive was not directly asked, a number of respondents characterized the allocations from their museum budgets as "tiny" or "very tiny" or "minuscule." These comments suggest that libraries receive little funding.

Services to the Public

This next section is a report of the data on the primary research question. Data are provided on the types and extent of services offered, the audiences for such services, and the benefits, challenges and limits of such services. Because the study is an exploratory one in uncharted waters, it does not include the usual practice of testing formal hypotheses.

Readers may want to keep in mind the broad definition of the public used in this study. Simply put, the public is anyone who is not part of the museum's staff. The public includes such diverse groups as museum members, schoolteachers, undergraduate and graduate students, university

faculty, scholars, artists and art students, docents, school children, and members of the community at large.

Reference calls. One service that art museum libraries may be called upon to render is answering calls from the public. Table 5 contains a summary of the data on libraries' willingness to answer the public's telephone inquiries. Staff in nearly all medium and large libraries (100 percent and 95 percent respectively) are willing to answer reference calls from the public. The lone large library which does not answer calls requires submission of questions in writing. Small libraries (76 percent) are somewhat less likely to accept calls from the public. Slightly more than half (57 percent) of very small libraries offer this service.

The data shown in Table 5 suggest that larger libraries are more willing to answer telephone reference calls. Hesitancy on the part of smaller libraries to answer calls may be attributed to a lack of a large enough volume of suitable reference materials. Then too, smaller libraries may simply not have the staff (see Table 4) to answer such calls.

Table 6 shows means and medians for the number of reference calls per week by size of library. It appears that the larger the library, the greater the number of calls that the library receives from the public. For

Table 5--Willingness to answer reference calls from the public, by size of library (n=89)

| | Willing to answer calls | | Unwilling to answer calls | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percentage of total | Number | Percentage of total |
| Very small libraries (n=21) | 12 (57%) | 13 | 9 (43%) | 10 |
| Small libraries (n=21) | 16 (76%) | 18 | 5 (24%) | 6 |
| Medium libraries (n=21) | 21 (100%) | 24 | 0 (0%) | 0 |
| Large libraries (n=21) | 20 (95%) | 22 | 1 (5%) | 1 |
| Size unknown (n=5) | 3 (60%) | 3 | 2 (40%) | 2 |
| Totals | 72 | 80 | 17 | 19 |

Note: All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Percentages within parentheses represent the percentage for same size libraries. For example, 12 very small libraries (57 percent of very small libraries) are willing to answer reference calls from the public. This represents 13 percent of the total sample.

example, the 12 very small libraries which accept calls from the public average five each week in contrast with an average of 48.79 calls each week for the 20 large libraries.

Table 6 also includes means and medians for the number of hours spent each week answering the questions posed by callers. Again, there appears to be a link between size of library and number. Staff in large

Table 6--Reference calls, by size of library (n=69)

| | Number of calls per week | | Hours devoted to answering questions | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | Median | Mean | Median |
| Very small libraries (n=12) | 5 | 2.5 | 1.73 | 1 |
| Small libraries (n=16) | 7.93 | 6 | 2.04 | 2 |
| Medium libraries (n=21) | 20.76 | 17 | 3.92 | 3 |
| Large libraries (n=20) | 48.79 | 20 | 10.18 | 5 |
| Sample (n=69) | 22.48 | 10 | 4.94 | 2.5 |

libraries devote an average of 10.18 hours per week answering the reference questions which result from calls compared to an average of 1.73 hours for staff in very small libraries.

What types of questions do callers pose? The following topics were cited by more than 25 percent of respondents whose libraries accept calls from the public (n=72):

1. information on artists whose works the caller owns or wishes to purchase, including questions on identification, authentication and value (cited by 60 percent of respondents);

2. information on artists usually to complete a school assignment (cited by 50 percent of respondents);

3. information on the museum's permanent collection, exhibition schedule and other activities (cited by 36 percent of respondents);

4. general art reference questions (cited by 33 percent of respondents); and

5. information on other museum's addresses and/or exhibitions (cited by 31 percent of respondents).

It appears from this list that the public expects art museum libraries to have not only information on the museum's collection, but also information about a wide variety of art topics. This may be a problem for smaller libraries with quite limited collections.

Access. One key aspect of public service is whether a museum allows the public access to its library. Some museum libraries have regular public hours, while others allow access by appointment or no access at all. Table 7 shows a summary of the data on the access issue. Of 88 libraries, 53 (60 percent) have regular hours during which they are open to the public, while 30 (34 percent) are open by appointment and five (6 percent) do not permit the public to come into their libraries. While less than half (44 percent) of very small and small libraries have regular public hours, more than three-fourths (81 percent) of medium and large libraries do.

Table 7--Public access to libraries, by size of library (n=88)

| | Regular public hours | Open by appointment | No access |
|---|---|---|---|
| Very small libraries (n=20) | 9 | 10 | 1 |
| Small libraries (n=21) | 9 | 9 | 3 |
| Medium libraries (n=21) | 17 | 4 | 0 |
| Large libraries (n=21) | 17 | 3 | 1 |
| Size unknown (n=5) | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| Totals | 53 (60%) | 30 (34%) | 5 (6%) |

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Data presented earlier indicated that 52 percent of all the libraries are located in a public area within the main building of their institutions. It is interesting to note, however, that 72 percent of libraries with regular public hours are located in public areas, suggesting that location is linked with the provision of such services. Certainly, it is easier to offer public hours in situations where staff do not have to escort visitors.

The number of hours that the 53 libraries are open to the public ranges from 6 hours per week to 55.5 hours per week for a mean of 27.77 hours. There is little difference in means between very small and small libraries (26.5 hours), and medium and large libraries (28.15 hours).

There is, however, a marked difference in the numbers of individuals per week who use the libraries during these hours. In very small libraries, the mean is 18.55 people, in small libraries, it is 27.44 people, in medium libraries, it is 36.35 people, and in large libraries, it is 78.18 people.

Provision of public hours is not the only factor which determines use by the public. Another factor may be whether or not a museum charges an admission fee. Of 83 libraries, 42 (51 percent) are in museums which charge an admission fee, while 41 (49 percent) are in museums which do not. Yet only 17 percent of the museums which have such a fee, charge it when individuals come to use the library. These data suggest that in most art museums, fees do not present a barrier to use of their libraries.

The issue of access is a complex one, with both positive and negative aspects. Table 8 shows respondents' perceptions of the benefits associated with having public hours by present type of access. While 88 responses were received on access (see Table 7), only 62 respondents listed benefits. Forty-three responses were received from the 53 libraries with public hours. According to Table 8, the most common benefits are, "good public relations" (cited by 16 or 26 percent of respondents), "raised level of public knowledge about art" (cited by 13 or

Table 8--Benefits of having public hours, by present type of access (n=62)

| | Good public relations | Justification and and increased support for library and museum | Raised level of public knowledge about art | None | Increased use of library by a broader segment of the public | Public can depend on service at specific times/ convenience | Library can be used for other activities during non-public hours |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regular public hours (n=43) | 12 | 2 | 10 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 1 |
| Open by appointment (n=18) | 4 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| No access (n=1) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 16 (26%) | 3 (4.5%) | 13 (21%) | 9 (15%) | 12 (19%) | 8 (13%) | 1 (1.5%) |

Note: Percentages given are rounded to the nearest whole number except in the case of "Justification and increased support for library and museum" and "Library can be used for other activities during non-public hours" which are rounded to the nearest half.

21 percent of respondents) and "increased use of the library by a broader segment of the public" (cited by 12 or 19 percent of respondents).

The question on problems associated with having public hours drew a better response rate than the one on benefits. Sixty-six (75 percent) of the sample responded and some listed more than one problem. Table 9 indicates that more respondents believe that staffing is a problem (cited by 50 or 76 percent of respondents) than any other. Security is less often perceived as a problem (cited by 17 or 26 percent of respondents).

Users. Which segments of the public use the libraries? Of the 83 libraries that allow public use (either through regular hours or by appointment):

1. 79 (95 percent) reported use by museum tour guides (docents);
2. 75 (91 percent) reported use by museum members;
3. 69 (83 percent) reported use by college/university students;
4. 68 (82 percent) reported use by artists and art students;
5. 63 (76 percent) reported use by others in the general public;
6. 58 (70 percent) reported use by graduate students and also by college/university faculty;
7. 56 (67 percent) reported use by scholars;
8. 53 (64 percent) reported use by schoolteachers; and
9. 20 (24 percent) reported use by school children.

Respondents were asked to rank the categories of users according to

Table 9--Problems involved in having public hours, by present type of access (n=66)

| | Security[a] | Staffing[b] | Not enough materials and/or space | None |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regular public hours (n=44)[c] | 11 | 28 | 1 | 7 |
| Open by appointment (n=20)[c] | 5 | 21 | 5 | 1 |
| No access (n=2) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 17 (26%) | 50 (76%) | 6 (9%) | 8 (12%) |

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

[a]Includes theft, lack of control over who comes into the library, damaging and dislocating materials.

[b]Includes inadequate numbers of staff, inability to accomplish other tasks during public hours, lack of trained staff to handle patron's questions, and staff distracted from serving primary clientele (i.e., museum staff).

[c]Some respondents listed more than one problem.

frequency of use. Only 50 out of 83 respondents provided a partial or complete ranking. It was possible, however, to determine a rough ranking. From highest to lowest the ranking is as follows;

1. museum tour guides (docents);
2. college/university undergraduate students;
3. artists and art students;
4. graduate students;

5. others in the general public;
6. scholars;
7. college/university faculty;
8. museum members;
9. schoolteachers; and
10. school children.

When compared with the previous set of data, there appear to be parallels. The exception is the category, "museum members" who seem to use most of the libraries albeit infrequently.

In order to become a user, one must first learn of a library's existence. Table 10 shows that the most common ways in which the public learns of a library and its services are through museum publications (58 percent) and by word of mouth (45 percent).

What types of materials are most frequently requested by the public? Answers to this question were fragmented with some respondents mentioning types of materials (e.g., books, slides) and others giving types of information (e.g., artist's biographies, auction prices). From the 75 responses, however, it is clear that users are seeking written information sources rather than audiovisual (i.e., books, exhibition catalogs, auction catalogs, vertical files, rather than slides or videotapes). Only six respondents listed slides; none listed videotapes. Since many users are apparently seeking information on specific artists

Table 10--Ways in which the public learns of libraries and their services (n=73)

| | Number | Percentage of sample | Percentage of total responses |
|---|---|---|---|
| Museum publications[a] | 42 | 58 | 33 |
| Word of mouth | 33 | 45 | 26 |
| Visiting the museum[b] | 14 | 19 | 11 |
| Referrals from other area libraries | 14 | 19 | 11 |
| Local schools[c] | 10 | 14 | 8 |
| Telephone inquiries | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| Media[d] | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| Tours of museum | 2 | 3 | 1.5 |
| Directories | 2 | 3 | 1.5 |
| Totals | 127 | - - | 100% |

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number, except for those given for the last two categories which are rounded to the nearest half number.

[a]Includes such publications as members calendars, newsletters, brochures, and bulletins.

[b]Visitors may actually see the library or find out about it from museum guards and/or information desk personnel.

[c]Includes all levels of schools.

[d]Includes public service announcements, newspaper columns and advertisements.

or objects, they need books, exhibition catalogs and vertical files to gain the necessary information. There is also a segment of users who are looking for information on prices of art objects. Twenty-five respondents (33 percent) listed auction catalogs with price records as a frequently requested type of materials.

Additional services. Along with answering reference calls and providing access to the library itself, there are other services art museum libraries may offer. One of these is circulation of materials. Virtually all American public libraries let patrons borrow materials. Indeed, circulation of materials is one of the cornerstones upon which the public library is built. Although it was not always so, academic libraries today, by and large, also have liberal borrowing policies. Special libraries, on the other hand, often do not permit borrowing because of the nature of their collections (small and specialized) and their primary mission (to serve the organization's staff).

Table 11 is a matrix which summarizes art museum libraries' policies toward lending materials. The vast majority of museums do not permit any type of borrowing. Those that do tend to have restrictive policies limiting either the types of materials that may be borrowed

and/or the categories of individuals who may exercise borrowing privileges. Table 11 shows that art museum libraries which do permit borrowing are most likely to extend the privilege to those segments of the public who have close ties to the museum (e.g., museum members).

Photocopying is another service which may be available in art museum libraries. Such service is critical because borrowing privileges are so limited (see Table 11). Table 12 is a summary of the data on availablity of photocopying equipment, whether patrons are permitted to make their own copies and costs. A great majority (87 percent) of all the libraries have photocopying equipment available. There are, however, some differences between very small and small libraries, and medium and large libraries. First, very small and small libraries are somewhat less likely than medium and large libraries to have the necessary equipment. Second, they are also less likely (45 percent as opposed to 78 percent) to allow patrons to make their own copies. Finally, they charge an average of $.06 less per copy than medium and large libraries. One reason for the lower mean cost is that five of the very small and small libraries make copies for free.

Table 11--Matrix showing types of materials, by categories of individuals who may borrow these materials (n=89)

| | Books | Slides | Videotapes | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Museum members | 9 | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| Docents | 5 | 6 | 4 | 0 |
| Teachers/faculty | 2 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Graduate students | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Museum volunteers | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Adults enrolled in museum classes | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| General public | 2 | 4[a] | 1 | 0 |
| Totals | 24 (27%) | 20 (22%) | 11 (12%) | 1 (1%) |

Note: Numbers given represent the number of museum's which permit borrowing in each category. Percentages given are rounded to the nearest whole number. No data were gathered on staff borrowing privledges.

[a]Includes one museum which rents slides and another which charges a handling fee.

Table 12--Photocopying facilities, services and costs, by size of library (n=83)

| | Equipment available | | Permit self-service[a] | | Mean cost per page[b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | |
| Very small and small libraries (n=37) | 29 | 78 | 13 | 45 | $.09 |
| Medium and large libraries (n=41) | 40 | 98 | 31 | 78 | $.15 |
| Size unknown (n=5) | 3 | 60 | 2 | 67 | $.10 |
| Totals | 72 | 87 | 46 | 64 | $.13 |

Note: Percentages given are rounded off to the nearest whole number.

[a]Patrons permitted to make copies themselves.

[b]Rounded off to the nearest cent.

The future. The final question on the survey related to the future. Respondents were asked to list additional library services they would like to offer the public if resources (e.g., personnel, money) were no object.

The data suggest that resources are so lacking at some libraries that respondents were unable to even consider the question. This was particularly true of respondents at very small or small libraries. Only 13 respondents (62 percent) from very small libraries (n=21) and 16

respondents (76 percent) from small libraries (n=21) responded at all.

Data from the 13 very small and 16 small libraries were combined for a total of 29 libraries. Fifteen respondents (52 percent) from these 29 libraries listed a need for more staff rather than additional services.

There were other "non-services" responses as well. Respondents from eight (28 percent) of the 29 libraries listed a need for additional books or other materials. Respondents from eight libraries (28 percent) listed a a need to computerize some aspect of their libraries' operations (e.g., cataloging)

Some respondents from very small and small libraries did list services. (Note: respondents could list more than one service.) Responses from these combined groups are presented in summary fashion below:

1. nine (31 percent) listed beginning or expanding public hours;
2. four (14 percent) listed additional reference services;
3. three (10 percent) listed beginning circulation of books;
4. two (7 percent) listed beginning outreach services;
5. one (3 percent) listed beginning an interlibrary loan service; and
6. one (3 percent) listed expanding service to the handicapped.

The picture was somewhat different for medium and large libraries. First, these libraries had a higher response rate for the question.

Respondents from 20 (95 percent) of the 21 medium libraries and 18 (86 percent) of the 21 large libraries gave some response for a total of 38. Again, data from the two groups were combined. Second, only four (11 percent) of the respondents listed a need for additional staff in lieu of listing services.

As was the case with very small and small libraries, there were some "non-services" responses. Six (16 percent) listed acquiring greater numbers of books and other materials, although these respondents listed services as well. Four (11 percent) of medium and large libraries) listed a need for more space. Here again, however, respondents listed services as well.

Below is a summary of the data on services from respondents at medium and large libraries:

1. twenty (53 percent) listed making online reference services available;
2. fifteen (39 percent) listed expanding public hours;
3. six (16 percent) listed offering bibliographic instruction;
4. five (13 percent) listed offering additional reference services;
5. one (3 percent) listed offering interlibrary loans;
6. one (3 percent) listed starting a Reader's Advisory Service;

7. one (3 percent) listed starting a Children's Department; and
8. one (3 percent) listed beginning the circulation of periodicals.

(Note: Repondents could list more than one service.)

In addition to the data discussed above, there were responses from four out of five libraries of unknown size. Two (50 percent) listed beginning public hours, two (50 percent) listed expanding video services, and one (25 percent) listed beginning circulation of books. (Note: Respondents could list more than one service.)

## SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

From the data, a picture emerges of art museum libraries' services to the public. This picture is summarized below. (Note: In this section, very small and small libraries are called smaller libraries. Medium and large libraries are referred to as larger libraries.)

A large measure of art museum libraries' contact with the public comes through reference calls. Of the larger libraries, 98 percent accept such calls. Of the smaller libraries, 66 percent answer telephone reference calls. The larger the library, the higher the volume of calls and consequently, the higher the amount of staff time devoted to answering

questions. Questions from the public most often relate to information on artists whose works the caller owns or wishes to purchase (60 percent), or information on artists necessary to complete a school assignment (50 percent).

The vast majority (94 percent) of libraries permit access, either through regular public hours or by appointment. Sixty percent have regular hours in which they are open to the public. These libraries average 27.77 public hours per week. Larger libraries are more likely than smaller libraries to have regular public hours. Libraries located in public areas of their institutions are also more likely to have regular public hours. Most art museums which have admission fees do not charge library users. Therefore, admission fees are not a barrier to library use.

In terms of individuals who come into the libraries (as opposed to callers), the most frequent users are museum tour guides (docents). It is not surprising that this segment of the "public" uses museum libraries heavily since most art museums have on-going docent training programs. Docents are expected to complete assignments, learn about their institutions exhibitions, etc. It is logical to expect that they would use their own institution's library before a public or academic library.

College/university undergraduates are also heavy users. They often need to obtain information to complete term papers. In the author's view, one reason undergraduates may come to a museum library is that the service is apt to be more personal than that which can be found in a larger, academic setting.

Graduate students are less likely than undergraduates to use museum libraries. Although this seems surprising, it may be that graduate students need a larger volume of materials than most museum libraries offer and/or services such as online reference which are more common in academic libraries.

Because art museum libraries most frequently use museum publications and word of mouth as the ways in which they advertise their services, those segments of the public which have the closest ties to the museum are most likely to know of a library's existence.

Public users have a strong tendency to ask for written information sources, rather than audiovisual. Thus, libraries wishing to increase public service might be wise to focus acquisitions on books and exhibition catalogs.

Few libraries currently permit circulation of books. Therefore,

access to inexpensive photocopying is a must. Most art museum libraries (87 percent) do allow photocopying for a modest charge (i.e., an average fee of $.13 per page).

The picture that emerges is one of quiescence. Although most art museum libraries are willing to serve the public, they do not actively seek out users from the public sector. This finding is consistent with an earlier study by Freiband. In her case study of four large art museum libraries, she found that public use was permitted, but not actively encouraged (Freiband 1973).

Why is this the case? Respondents answers provide important clues.

Lack of resources is clearly a barrier to public service. The resource which is most lacking is adequate staffing. Many smaller libraries have no paid library personnel; instead, they depend on volunteers or other museum personnel to run their libraries. Much of the paid staff is part-time and non-M.L.S. While larger libraries all reported having paid library staff, the majority (63 percent) of staff do not hold an M.L.S. degree. Libraries of all sizes do not have enough personnel.

Respondents seem well aware of the staffing problems. For example, when asked about the problems involved in having public hours,

76 percent cited staffing as a problem. Respondents clearly would like to offer additional public hours but cannot given present staffing levels.

Another indication of the dimension of the staffing problem may be seen in respondents answers to a question about additional services they would like to offer the public. Respondents from smaller libraries tended to list the need for more staff in lieu of listing services.

The data also suggest that art museum libraries do not have enough materials and are lacking in online reference facilities. Across the board, respondents indicated a need for more materials. Respondents from larger libraries indicated that they would like to offer online reference service. If art museum libraries want to compete with public and academic libraries, they must have plenty of materials as well as online reference service.

Of course, the resource that could ease the problems is money. Ninety percent of the libraries receive an allocation from their museum's budget. Comments from the respondents suggest that these allocations are quite small. In fact, nine of the smaller libraries receive no direct funds from their museums' budgets.

As long as resources are so lacking, it is likely that museum

libraries will continue to restrict the scope of services provided. In essence, this means that while their parent institutions continue to strive to serve wider audiences, the libraries' potential as a magnet for attracting the public remains untapped.

Eighteen years ago, Freiband (1973) reported that art museum libraries occupied a low status position within their parent institutions. She also reported that the potential of the museum library as a public service was being ignored by museum administrators (Freiband 1973, 206). Unfortunately, the present study suggests that both her findings remain true.

Changing the picture will be difficult given the present fiscal crisis in which many museums find themselves. It is clear that museum librarians will need to take a much more active role than they have in the past. They need to decide whether service to the public is indeed an important goal. Respondents in the present study equivocated. For example, when asked about the benefits of having regular public hours, 27 respondents (30 percent) gave no answer.

Art museum librarians seem isolated from other librarians both within their communities and around the nation. There is a great need for

organizations such as the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) and the Special Library Association (SLA) to reach out to these librarians with information and training.

The key to offering better and more extensive service to the public may lie in collaborating with other museum departments and/or other libraries within the community. For example, flyers that many museums do to acompany special exhibitions could contain a short bibliography (three to five references) and visitors could be advised to visit the museum library to read about the works they have just seen. This is not a new idea. Something similar was proposed by John Cotton Dana over 70 years ago (Dana 1920, 42-43).

## AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As Freiband states,

> This study points out many areas which need further research. The lack of studies involving art museums and their libraries is evident to anyone undertaking research in the field. Questions remaining unanwered indicate the large amount of information which needs to be discovered, as well as the range of topics open for investigation (1973, 231).

Although Freiband made that statement 18 years ago, it remains true today.

Because the need for research is so great, only broad outlines are given here. There is a need to build upon the present study. This could be accomplished in several ways. One way is through case studies of several art museum libraries of differing sizes. This would yield more in-depth data regarding services to the public than a survey approach allows. Another way is through surveys of museum directors. It is important to learn their perceptions regarding library services to the public. Still other groups which should be tapped for study are museum visitors and individuals currently using art museum libraries.

There is also a need for a parallel study to the present one which would address the issue of art museum libraries' services to museum staffs. As special libraries, serving their own staff must be a priority, yet little is known about the dimensions of that service.

Finally, there is a need to study examples of interlibrary cooperation. What examples exist of special library collaboration with other types of libraries? Were they successful? Which forms of collabórarion/cooperation work best (e.g., shared cataloging). What

problems do collaborators encounter? How to they solve them?

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# APPENDIX

COLLECTS

MUSEUM OF

# ART MUSEUM LIBRARY PUBLIC SERVICES SURVEY

**Instructions**
Please answer the following questions. The term "public" includes members of the community at large as well as students, teachers, scholars, and college/university faculty. Please return your completed survey by **February 10, 1991.** Thank you.

1. Current number of volumes held by your library (if you do not have an exact count, please estimate). _____

2. Types of materials held by your library (please check all that apply):

| | |
|---|---|
| _____ Books | _____ Exhibition Catalogs |
| _____ Slides | _____ Vertical Files |
| _____ Serials | _____ Auction Catalogs |
| _____ Videotapes | _____ Other (please describe) _____ |

3. Library location:

_____ within the main building of the museum in a public area
_____ within the main building of the museum in a non-public area
_____ in a building close by the main building of the museum
_____ other (please describe) _____

4. Is the library part of another museum department?

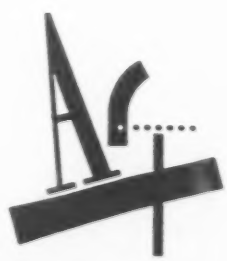
_____ yes _____ no
If yes, what department (e.g., Education)? _____

5. Number and type of library personnel:

_____ Full-time with an M.L.S.
_____ Part-time with an M.L.S.
_____ Full-time, non-M.L.S.
_____ Part-time, non-M.L.S.

6. Sources of library funds (please check all that apply):

_____ allocation from museum budget
_____ endowment funds
_____ state, county or municipal funds
_____ federal funds
_____ gifts or grants from individuals or foundations
_____ grants from other institutions in return for services
_____ Friends of the Library
_____ income from sales of slides or other materials
_____ other (please describe)



7. Do your librarians answer reference calls from the public?

_____ yes _____ no
If yes, please estimate the average number of such calls per week _____ and the total number of hours per week library staff spend in answering these reference calls_____ .
Briefly describe the most frequent types of questions you receive (e.g., questions related to objects in the museum's collection, general art reference questions). _____

_____

_____

_____

8. Does your library presently have hours in which it is open to the general public?

_____ yes _____ no, but available by appointment _____ no
If yes, please indicate the days and hours it is open and the total number of hours it is open to the public. _____ Day(s) _____ Hours _____ Total

(If no, but available by appointment please go to question #10)
(If no, please go to question #16)

9. Estimate the number of people who use the library during public hours each week. _____

10. Aside from museum staff, who typically uses your library? Please rank the groups listed below (1=indicates most frequent users; n/a indicates no use).

_____ Museum Members
_____ Schoolteachers
_____ College/University Faculty
_____ Scholars
_____ Artists and Art Students
_____ Museum Tour Guides (Docents)
_____ School Children
_____ Graduate Students
_____ College/University Undergraduate Students
_____ Others in the General Public

11. Does your museum have a general admission fee? _____ yes _____no
If yes, is the public required to pay the admission fee in order to gain access to the library?
_____ yes _____ no

12. What types of materials are most frequently requested by the public? _____

_____

_____

13. Are photocopying facilities available? _____ yes, per copy charge is _____ _____ no
If yes, are patrons permitted to make copies themselves? _____ yes _____ no

14. Does your library allow materials to circulate to the public? _____ yes _____ no
If yes, please describe your circulation policy in the space provided below. Be sure to include who can borrow materials (e.g., schoolteachers), the types of materials that can be borrowed (e.g., books, slides) and for how long. _____

_____

_____

_____

15. How does the public usually learn of your services? _____

_____

16. In your opinion, what are (or would be) the benefits of having hours when your library is open to the public? _____

_____

_____

17. In your opinion, what are (or would be) the problems involved with having hours when your library is open to the public? _____

_____

_____

18. If resources (e.g., money, personnel) were no object, what additional library services would you like to offer to the public? _____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing this survey. If you would like to receive a summary of survey results, please write your name and address in the space provided below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Please return your completed survey in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope.**